

allowed themselves to be concussed, falsified their vows, stultified themselves, and blazoned their shame before the world, by placing, according to this view of the twenty-third chapter of the Confession, all church government in the hands of the king, with this constitutional proviso, that he shall "exercise the power assigned to him, by and through the agency of Synods assembled by his authority, and acting in his name." Still further, Mr. Trotter tells us that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, seeing how ill it had fared with the interests of the truth in the Westminster Assembly, put every thing right, not by an open and honest rejection of the unsound doctrine—for they allow that article to stand without exception—but by a remark applied to a different part of the Confession; thereby, as Mr. Trotter would have us believe, "denying to the magistrate the power of calling Synods by which only the Westminster Assembly authorized him to rule the church." In other words, in the twenty-third chapter, they announce it as an article of their faith that, according to the light of God's word, a particular power belongs to the civil magistrate; and, by the remark which they have applied to the thirty first chapter, they have craftily deprived him of the means of exercising the power which they had previously said belongs to him of divine right. An ingenious man is Mr. Trotter; and wonderfully disposed to practise on the credulity of his readers.

This theory is evidently contemplated with so much complacency by Mr. Trotter, that he may have succeeded in persuading himself of its truth; but if he would for a time leave the regions of fiction, and look at facts as history records them, he would see a picture very different from that which his fancy has drawn. His theory requires him to maintain that there was a real disagreement between the Scottish Commissioners and the ruling party in the Westminster Assembly; and he relates a well known anecdote concerning George Gillespie, in order to show this. But the anecdote does not show this. Every intelligent reader must see that what the anecdote shows is, that the learned Selden was so completely answered that he himself acknowledged a defeat. If, in saying that Gillespie "convinced many by his unanswerable arguments," Mr. Trotter wishes it to be understood that it was only some that were convinced, and that still a "ruling party"

carried the point against the learning and argument of the Scottish Commissioner, he is misrepresenting the case altogether. The decision of the Assembly was in accordance with the argument of Gillespie; and the views of the Scottish Commissioners were the views entertained by the "ruling party" in the Westminster Assembly.

Of the entire number of those who were summoned to the Westminster Assembly, there were from sixty to eighty in ordinary attendance. Some Episcopalians attended at first, but these soon withdrew.—The remainder were Presbyterians, Independents, and Erastians; the distinctive principle of this last class being, that church-government and discipline are to be regulated by the will of the civil magistrate. There were only about ten or twelve Independents; and it was the anxiety of the majority to carry them along with them in the various conclusions which were come to, that occasioned the most protracted discussions in which they were engaged. The Erastians were still fewer than the Independents.—Coleman was the only minister who was an out and out Erastian, although Lightfoot occasionally advocated the same views. These were supported by the learning of Selden, the tact of Whitelock, who was also a member of Parliament, and by what legal knowledge might have been possessed by Oliver St. John, a Solicitor. Principal Baillie, one of the Commissioners from Scotland, writing to Mr. Dickson, March 17th, 1646, and referring to the principle embodied in the thirtieth chapter of the Confession says, "We find it necessary to say, 'That Christ in the New Testament had instituted a church-government distinct from the civil, to be exercised by the affairs of the church, without commission from the magistrate.' None in the Assembly has any doubt of this truth but one Mr. Coleman, a professed Erastian; a man reasonably learned, but stupid and inconsiderate, half a pleasant, and of small estimation." It is evident from this, that notwithstanding the learning of Selden and Lightfoot, the Erastians were the farthest possible from being the "ruling party" in the Assembly. Even the few members who held these principles, seemed to look rather to Parliament as the place where their views would meet with support. In point of fact, the Erastians were powerful in Parliament; and endeavoured to use their influence there against the views that were prevalent in the Assembly. That Assembly, however, would neither be brow-beaten nor outwitted. They discharged their duty faithfully and ably; and, whether the advice might be accepted by Parliament or not, they stated their own convictions as to what were the truths of God's Word on the different points submitted to their consideration.

Notwithstanding the exigences, therefore,